DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 365 410 PS 021 252

AUTHOR	Allen, MaryLee; And Others
TITLE	Helping Children by Strengthening Families: A Look at Family Support Programs.
INSTITUTION	Children's Defense Fund, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-938008-94-3
PUB DATE	92
NOTE	103p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Children's Defense Fund, 25 E Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20001.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Books (010)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Child Advocacy; Child Health; Childhood Needs; Child Rearing; Child Welfare; Early Childhood Education; *Family (Sociological Unit); *Family Programs; Parent Child Relationship; *Parent Education; *Parenting Skills; Parents; Program Descriptions; Social Services
IDENTIFIERS	*Family Advocacy; Family Preservation Services; Family Resource and Support Programs; *Family Support

ABSTRACT

By strengthening families' ability to nurture their children physically, emotionally, and intellectually, family support programs increase the likelihood that children will grow up healthy, safe, and successful. This report provides child advocates and others who work for children's well-being a clearer idea of what family support programs do, how they operate, and why they are effective. The first of the report's three parts lays out the basic principles of family support, traces its historical and disciplinary roots, and contrasts the family support approach with traditional social services. The second part describes a variety of family support and parent education programs in action, along with other types of programs that have added a family support or parent education component. The final section examines the challenges involved in establishing successful and lasting family support programs and discusses the importance of incorporating family support principles into other human service systems. The report concludes with recommendations for steps that must be taken at the federal, state, and community levels to implement community-based family support programs that will help parents nurture and protect their children. The report includes 23 selected resources and a list of the programs mentioned in the report. (TJQ)

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